

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01  
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AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 9537

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, CG, IT  
SUBJECT: ITALIAN VIEWS ON SHABA INCURSION

1. IN MAY 23 DISCUSSION ABOUT EVENTS IN SHABA, MFA DIRECTOR FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS RACHELE SAID THAT ITALIANS FOUND THEMSELVES IN DIFFICULT SITUATION VIS-A-VIS EUROPEAN ALLIES. WHILE GOI WAS GRATEFUL TO FRENCH AND BELGIANS FOR HELP IN EVACUATING ITALIAN CITIZENS FROM KOLWEZI, ITALIANS ARE "NOT ENTHUSIASTIC" ABOUT FRENCH ROLE IN ZAIRE. THEIR PRIMARY CONCERN IS THAT SOVIETS AND CUBANS WILL BE ABLE TO CITE FRENCH ROLE IN HELPING MOBUTU FIGHT SECESSIONIST GROUP AS PRECEDENT FOR CUBAN ROLE IN HELPING MENGISTU AGAINST  
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ERITREANS. RACHELE SAID THAT PRESS COVERAGE IN USSR OF SHABA EVENTS INDICATES THAT SOVIETS MAY BE PREPARING WAY FOR SUCH A JUSTIFICATION OF CUBAN PARTICIPATION IN ERITREA. FACT THAT KATANGESE INVASION/REVOLTS HAVE NOT SPARKED INSURGENCY AMONG OTHER TRIBES IN ZAIRE SHOWS THAT REBELS DO NOT CONSTITUTE PART OF COUNTRY-WIDE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT FOUNDED ON POLITICAL BASIS BUT SIMPLY REPRESENT

A TRIBAL SECESSIONIST GROUP. ON THIS BASIS, PARALLEL WITH ERITREANS COULD BE MADE.

2. RACHELE ADDED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI WAS NOT IN POSITION TO RAISE THIS PROBLEM WITH FRENCH AT INFORMAL FOREIGN MINISTERS' CONFERENCE OVER THE WEEKEND IN DENMARK. SINCE SIMONET WAS NOT PRESENT AND SINCE DE GUIRINGAUD ARRIVED LATE, LATTER WAS IN POSITION OF BEING ONLY ONE PRESENT IN POSSESSION OF FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF SHABA EVENTS AND THUS WAS ABLE TO GIVE HOUR-LONG JUSTIFICATION OF FRENCH DECISION TO HELP ZAIRE. AS NO ONE WAS IN A POSITION TO QUESTION FRENCH STATEMENT, OTHER FOREIGN MINISTERS, SHARING FORLANI'S PREDICAMENT, LIMITED THEMSELVES TO THANKING FRENCH FOR AID IN EVACUATING THEIR CITIZENS.

3. AS TO SITUATION IN SHABA AREA, RACHELE SAID THAT ITALIANS BELIEVE THAT KATANGESSE ARE OPERATING MAINLY OUT OF CAMPS IN NO MAN'S LAND AREA OF NORTHERN ZAMBIA. THIS AREA HARBORS SWAPO AND ZAPU INSURGENTS AND CUBANS ADVISERS AS WELL AS KATANGESSE, AND GROUPS ARE KNOWN TO COOPERATE IN RAIDS. RACHELE ADDED THAT ANGOLANS, IN EFFORT TO AVOID BEING BLAMED FOR KATANGESSE RAIDS INTO ZAIRE, HAVE MOVED LARGE NUMBERS OF KATANGESSE REFUGEES OUT OF BORDER AREAS AND HAVE RELOCATED THEM IN CAMPS SCATTERED AROUND ANGOLA AS WELL AS IN NORTHERN ZAMBIA. WHOLE NEW GENERATION OF YOUNG KATANGESSE SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN ANGOLA AND ARE USED AGAINST UNITA FORCES. CONFIDENTIAL

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RACHELE POINTED TO REPORTS OF EXTREME YOUTH OF KATANGESSE TROOPS IN KOLWEZI AS INDICATION THAT THESE WERE AMONG THOSE TRAINED IN ANGOLA.

4. IN KOLWEZI FIGHTING ITSELF, ITALIANS DISTINGUISH AMONG THREE PHASES: FIRST WAS VIOLENT AND CONSISTED OF CONFLICT BETWEEN INVADERS AIDED BY INDIGENOUS POPULATION AND ZAIRIAN TROOPS. SECOND WAS MORE CONTROLLED PERIOD IN WHICH OFFICERS (WHO, SOME REPORTS SUGGEST, MIGHT HAVE BEEN CUBAN) EXERCISED DISCIPLINE OVER TROOPS AND PREVENTED VIOLENCE AGAINST EUROPEANS. THIRD COINCIDED WITH DEPARTURE OF THESE OFFICERS AND REPORTS OF ARRIVAL OF FRENCH PARATROOPERS AND WAS CHARACTERIZED BY EXTREME VIOLENCE AGAINST EUROPEANS. ITALIANS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT INDIGENOUS POPULATION WAS "APATHETIC" (AS CHARACTERIZED IN STATE 129376), BUT RATHER PARTICIPATED IN CONFLICT AND LOOTING. SOME PLAYED POSITIVE ROLE IN IDENTIFYING EUROPEANS THEY HAD WORKED WITH AND PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST THEM. MFA HAD NO ADDITIONAL REPORTS OF ITALIANS KILLED IN FIGHTING AND WAS SURPRISED BY NUMBER OF ITALIANS LOCATED IN AREA: ORIGINAL ESTIMATE HAD BEEN 50 BUT OVER 100 REFUGEES HAD ALREADY APPEARED. GARDNER

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## Message Attributes

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